

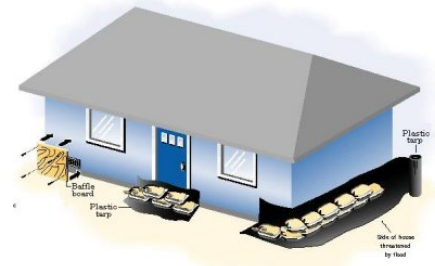


## Fact Sheet: Proper Use of Sandbags



### Steps to Protect Your Home

- Do not rely on sandbags alone to protect your property. Use baffle boards (plywood sheeting) or sheets of plastic tarp with sandbags.
- To form a sandbag wall, place bags tightly against one another to form the first layer of defense. Stagger the second and subsequent layers of bags, similar to the pattern of bricks on a wall. Never use bags to build a fortress around your property because this approach can trap water between sandbag walls and structures, causing further damage.
- Baffle boards consist of 3/4 inch plywood sheets with a soft gasket material like felt or foam rubber. They are effective for closing off vents, low windows and doors from floodwater. *If placed over vents, baffle boards must be removed immediately after the rain subsides.* To temporarily seal foundation vents, windows, doorways and garage doorways:
  1. Use 3/4" plywood to overlap the window or vent by three or four inches on all sides.
  2. Use soft gasket material like felt or foam rubber that is at least 2 inches wide. Attach it with waterproof glue to the 3/4" plywood.
  3. Use four or more nails, screws or bolts to secure the baffle boards over the opening. In stucco, cement or brick walls, special screws or expansion bolts will be required.
  4. Install baffle boards to the outside frame of the door.
  5. **For garage doors**, suitable boards one-inch thick may be used instead of plywood for the door seals. The bottom edge of the baffle board should be shaped to fit the driveway surface so there will be a watertight seal on the bottom. Use baffles to seal door cracks vertical to and higher than the bottom seal.
  6. **In an emergency**, fasten sheets of plastic or building (tar) paper over the opening and seal with caulk, putty or clay.
  7. Using plastic tarp between a structure and sandbags helps keep floodwater from seeping between the house siding and foundation sills.
  8. Care should be taken to place sandbags tightly against one another. Place the next sandbag over the folded, tied end to provide a good seal. Complete each layer before starting the next layer. **Limit placement to two layers.**
  9. After placing the first layer of sandbags, stagger the second layer of bags, much like the pattern of bricks in a wall.



Taking these precautions will minimize the amount of water and sediment entering your home and crawl space and prevent damage to your home's structure.

**Remember**, sealing foundation vents prohibits air circulation. *These home protection measures are temporary and should be removed immediately after the rain event.* It is crucial for you to immediately open vents after or between storms to protect your foundation and sub floor; and prevent the growth of mold and mildew.

- Water can leak into crawl spaces and/or basements through foundation cracks, pipe holes, vents, doors or windows. Also, it can seep between the house siding and foundation sills. Use cement to fill cracks in the foundation, seal openings around pipes with cement or caulk; and seal the joint between siding and foundation with caulk.
- For homes with cement slab floors:
  1. Use special paints or sealants to prevent the water from penetrating brick.
  2. Patch all cracks in the outside foundation with regular patching mixes.
- There are several ways to dispose of sandbags. If sandbags come into contact with floodwater they may contain contaminants such as sewage. Wear rubber gloves when removing used sandbags after a flood.
  1. Clean, washed sand that can be added to gardens as a soil amendment.
  2. Sand should not be placed in garbage receptacles or poured into storm drains or catch basins.

**Filling, Stacking and Placing Sandbags**  
**Emergency Storm Preparation**  
**FILLING SANDBAGS**



Fill sandbags one-half full. Sand is suggested if readily available, however, sand is not mandatory and soil may be used.

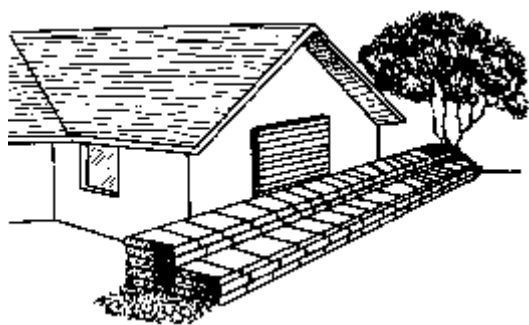


Fold top of sandbag down and rest the bag on its folded top.

### STACKING SANDBAGS



Care should be taken to stack the sandbags in accordance with the illustration (left). Place each sandbag as shown, completing each layer before starting the next layer.



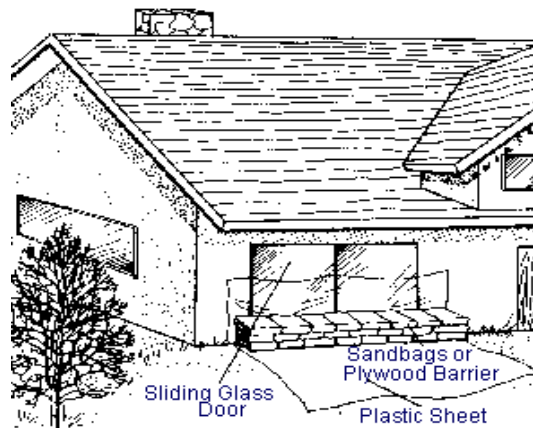
Limit placement to two layers unless a building is used as a backing (left) or sandbags are pyramided as shown below.



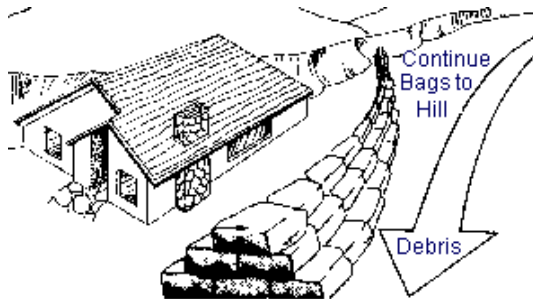
PLACE SANDBAGS PROPERLY TO DIVERT WATER AND DEBRIS

Contact the District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency, Hazard Mitigation Program on (202) 673-2101 ext. 1163 for additional information regarding personal preparedness, prevention and protection measures.

### OPTIONAL SANDBAG USES



Sealing a Sliding  
Glass Door



Directing Debris  
Away From Buildings

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